



All Roads Lead To...

By Guy Ferraton

Lent is a time to prepare your heart for Easter. But how? For Guy Ferraton, nothing better than the Way of the Cross.

The Way of the Cross, with its 14 stations, dates back to the High Middle Ages. If you couldn't go to Jerusalem to pray and contemplate with your own eyes the places where Jesus experienced his Passion, you could live the experience by proxy, at home or in church.

That's the history part. The important thing, the essential thing, is to contemplate this total gift of Jesus, and to internalize it. To the point of wanting to set out in turn and follow the path of self-giving. Basically, it's all about living your Christian life. In this sense, all roads lead to the cross.

We meditate on the Stations of the Cross during Lent, it's true. But the Way of the Cross is for life. Because it's a wonderful illustration of who we are and who we can become. At different times in our lives, we are Pilate. We wash our hands of the evil we do to others and to God. And if we are suffering, crucified, so to speak, next to Christ, we can either be the Good Thief who turns to Him, or the other villain, hurling curses at Him, inviting Jesus to drink our gall. At other times, we're Simon Peter, and we deny this Christ we claim to love. We run away from commitment and the trials that may come with an attachment to Jesus. We seek comfort.

I know that personally. For about twenty years I was quite far from Him. The return was prayerful, and not without trials. So I too have been a part of the crowd that, carried away by emotion, cried out "Crucify Him!" And that's why I love the 5th Station of the Cross, where Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross. It's a gesture of service, support and solidarity. Christ calls us to conversion and Simon of Cyrene, in his own way, accepts this call. By doing service to others, we walk with Him towards the resurrection. It is a beautiful example, and I dare say that those who do not believe in Christ can also follow him in their own way, by taking the path of love and giving themselves for others.

And that's why, at the Cathédrale parish, when we organize a Way of the Cross, we invite people to make a donation to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The Way of the Cross is first and foremost an interior experience, but one that goes beyond the four walls of our soul to open a door to others, and an even more radical gift of self. Perhaps even to the end. This Lent, let's all make a Way of the Cross. Alone or in church. Let's give of our time for prayer, and of our hearts for others.